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ABSTRACT

This document is a chapter in "The Principles and Practice of Educational Management," which aims to provide a systematic and analytical introduction to the study of educational management. The structure of the book reflects the main substantive areas of educational leadership and management, and most of the major themes are covered in the volume's 19 chapters, of which this is one. This chapter examines the evaluation of teachers and leaders in schools and colleges. It looks at the two key elements of managing systems--accountability and professional development--and examines the tension between these two systems. If accountability is a key purpose of performance appraisal, then the need to help the performer to develop is crucial. Without that opportunity, performance may remain static. Some of the factors that have been shown to affect performance appraisals are teacher autonomy, the various models of effective teaching, context, the new emphasis on learning, and the issue of rewards. The main question, though, that addresses the management of performance appraisal is as follows: How are national requirements to be managed at the school or college level? In countries where self-management of schools and colleges is well developed, answers to this question are beginning to emerge. However, in any scheme of performance appraisal, certain components are common, such as some form of self-evaluation and observation. Although it is likely that models of learning will develop that may drastically alter the role of the teacher, the teacher's place is certain to remain pivotal in educational institutions. Effective managers will always be aware of the changing environment within which their institutions exist. (Contains 35 references.) (RJM)

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# Appraisal and Performance Management.

David Middlewood

2002

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# Appraisal and Performance Management

*David Middlewood*

## Introduction

This chapter refers to the importance in the current world context which is given to assessing the performance of teachers and of leaders of schools and colleges. The two key elements of managing systems for this assessment, accountability and professional development, are explored. The tension and/or balance between these two are considered in the context of various factors which affect the effectiveness of the management of performance. Emphases upon different elements of performance appraisal management are shown to differ according to perceptions and requirements in different contexts, both at national and at institutional level. The chapter concludes by drawing out key principles for effectiveness on which institutional managers might base their practice in this field, with the need being stressed for adaptability to reflect changes occurring now and in the future.

### *The significance of performance and appraisal in education*

In the global context of competitiveness and comparison between industrialised nations, the necessity for a well-educated workforce in achieving economic prosperity has become increasingly recognised by their governments.

> In the United States, the growth of economic competition has led to a widespread appreciation that knowledge is now the key to wealth creation. The American saying 'Wise up or fall out' captures a growing perception that a highly trained, highly skilled workforce is the basis of future economic power. (Lofthouse et al., 1995: 15)

Since the quality of learning and teaching in educational organisations is the main factor in the provision of such a workforce, it is hardly surprising that there is considerable pressure to identify the means to assess accurately the performance of those responsible, i.e. teachers and headteachers or principals. In noting this link, it is interesting that several governments have borrowed the language of business and industry to apply in this field, such as

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'performance management', 'performance-related pay', etc. (O'Neill, 1997a: i). This criticism of educational management as a discipline – that it borrows too readily from business and industry – is made by Bush (1999: 15) when he argues that this practice fails to recognise the uniqueness of leadership and management in education in specific areas. The specific area referred to is that of learning and teaching, and is therefore relevant to any process of assessing the performance of teachers. Because of the pressure from governments to try to ensure effective performance in education, it is clear that one of the most obvious and overt reasons for appraising teacher and headteacher performance is for the purpose of *accountability*. This may be defined here as ensuring that teachers are fulfilling their role of providing effective teaching for quality learning for their students. Those who argue that teacher appraisal schemes have been proposed primarily for purposes of government control of individual accountability (e.g., O'Neill, 1997b) might point to the irony of the situation in the UK in the 1990s, where teacher appraisal was introduced as a statutory requirement in the early part of the decade *before* any clear ideas about performance (i.e. what was to be appraised) emerged in 1999–2000. If the original purpose was to ensure a check upon teachers, it was ill conceived as a concept and hardly surprising that the original proposals foundered because of the 'so what?' principle. (Middlewood, 2001a). A further irony was that, in seeking to introduce an appraisal model at any cost, the UK government produced one which was essentially driven not by accountability but by professional development needs. Only later was the issue of performance linked clearly with its appraisal.

What the UK government did was acknowledge that, as the original appraisal scheme was 'discredited' (the actual word used by the Secretary of State), the appraisal of teachers needed to be set in a context of performance management. This involved directly linking 'rewards' with how well teachers had performed in, for example, improving their students' achievements as measured in tests and examinations. Initially, this was linked to a national exercise in 2000 requiring teachers who had taught for at least nine years to produce evidence that they had raised student achievement, so that they could cross a 'threshold' and gain a pay rise. The rather simplistic format that is currently in place requires teachers to set agreed annual goals for performance in their schools and be 'appraised' according to these goals being attained. The issues concerning the effectiveness or otherwise of such a scheme are examined in this chapter.

As this 'performance management' process, of which appraisal was a key part, has developed in countries such as New Zealand and the UK, it has become closely linked with the issue of career progression. In countries such as Israel, Japan, Singapore and the USA, the notion of being assessed for performance before progressing to the next stage of a career in teaching is well established, although national schemes differed considerably in their details.

This link means that for educational leaders and managers appraising performance is also related to the management of the *recruitment* of teachers – both in the profession itself and, in some countries, in individual schools and colleges. A further strand is that of the *retention and motivation* of teachers. In other words, any scheme of managing performance and its appraisal may have to ensure that it answers the question: 'How can effective teachers be encouraged to remain (a) in the profession (b) in the classroom, through being confident that they will have opportunities to progress, to gain greater rewards and that this will be done by their being assessed fairly?'

The recent history of performance and appraisal management in education therefore suggests that not only is it of great importance, both at national and institutional level, but that it needs to be considered in terms of its purposes and its relationship to other important aspects of human resource management.

## Accountability and professional development

If accountability is a key purpose of appraisal of performance, then equally the need to recognise the opportunity for the performer to develop is crucial. Without that opportunity, performance may remain static. However good that performance might be, the emphasis in performance management is on *improvement*. In the case of professional employees such as teachers or school leaders, it may be particularly important to ensure that personal professional development is central to any scheme of managing their performance, since the ultimate motivation to improve must come from themselves. In fact, I know of no performance appraisal scheme which does not recognise the need for some form of training or development to be acknowledged as part of that scheme. However, given the overwhelming acceptance of the need for accountability to be a key reason for having appraisal, the balance between accountability and professional development lies at the heart of how effectively performance appraisal is managed. If seen as a continuum, the two extremes may be polarised, as in Figure 8.1

**Figure 8.1** Continuum of performance appraisal emphases

South Africa provides a striking example of the two extremes of approach, based as they are on teacher appraisal in the apartheid and post-apartheid periods. Under apartheid, the appraisal of teachers was seen by many, e.g.

Christie (1999), as discriminating against black teachers and was essentially used for control (Beardall, 1995). The scheme introduced post-apartheid, in the New Republic of South Africa, as described in detail by Thurlow (2001), has all the features of a scheme which is now at the opposite end of the continuum.

The appraisal of principals in Singapore (Chew, 2001) focuses on the principal's accountability for school improvement and any training for the principal is related strictly to the needs of the school as seen by the external assessor. The England and Wales scheme, on the other hand, as originally introduced in 1993, focused almost exclusively on the professional needs of teachers (Middlewood, 2001a).

This tension between accountability and professional development has implications for such matters as:

- the kind of data needed and used for the appraisal
- the ethos and context within which it takes place
- the areas of education upon which it focuses
- the identification of future aims or targets.

These two elements of performance appraisal are shown in Figure 8.2.

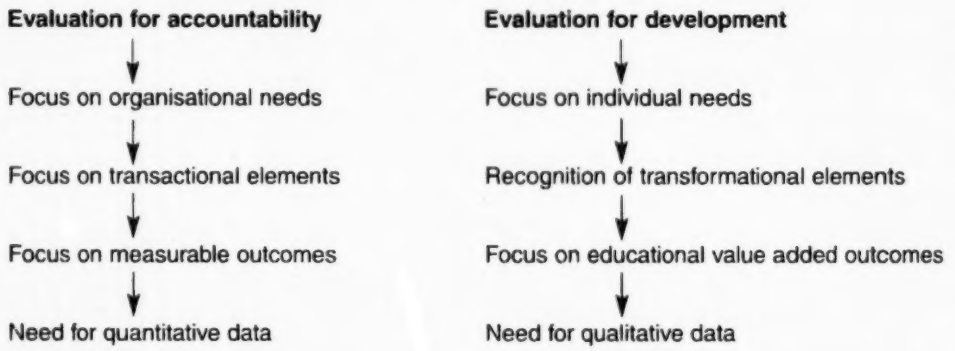
Evaluation for accountability
Focus on organisational needs
Focus on transactional elements
Focus on measurable outcomes
Need for quantitative data
Evaluation for development
Focus on individual needs
Recognition of transformational elements
Focus on educational value added outcomes
Need for qualitative data

**Figure 8.2** The two elements of performance appraisal

The two elements often lead to systems being 'muddied' (Hall, 1997: 152) in their purposes and Beer summarises the tension as it may affect the individual who:

> desires to confirm a positive self-image *and* to obtain organisational rewards of promotion or pay. The organisation wants individuals to be open to negative information about themselves so that they can improve their performance. As

> long as individuals see the appraisal process as having an important influence on their rewards (pay, recognition), their career (promotions and reputations), and their self-image they will be reluctant to engage in the kind of open dialogue required for valid evaluation and personal development. (Beer, 1986: 289)

Each of the elements described here has problems associated with it, if the emphasis taken in the management of performance and review tends too much towards *either* accountability *or* professional development. The problems arising from too much management emphasis on evaluation for accountability may be:

- alienation of staff, as they perceive themselves as assessed from above with little ownership for themselves in the scheme
- weak and even hostile relationships between staff appraised and their appraisers
- frank discussion about weaknesses is unlikely to occur
- encouragement of a concept of education which is narrow and focused on what is measurable.

On the other hand, problems arising from the management emphasis being too much on individual professional development may be:

- weaker teachers are insufficiently challenged
- training and development needs are not guaranteed to be available
- links with improvement in student achievement are difficult to ascertain
- teachers who are 'comfortably competent' may not improve, or may decline, in their performance.

## Factors affecting performance appraisal

Clearly therefore some balance between these two elements is necessary for an effective scheme to be operated. However, in examining the extent to which this applies in some existing schemes, it is helpful to consider some of the complexities which affect the management of appraisal of performance in educational institutions.

### *Teacher autonomy*

Ultimately the model of teaching which is still the predominant one in schools and colleges depends upon the teacher working in relative isolation from other staff. As Whitaker points out: 'school teachers are unusual in starting their careers in charge of quite large organisations – a learning company of

thirty or so individuals. In terms of the responsibilities and challenges this presents, they compare favourably with chief executives of medium-sized companies' (Whitaker 1997:78).

Unlike chief executives, classroom teachers manage their business on their own most of the time. This isolation and the autonomy that necessarily accompanies it in the authority and ability to handle the class in the way deemed most suitable by the teacher is not only highly prized by teachers as part of 'professionalism' (see Bolam: Chapter 7, this volume) but makes comparisons difficult, and therefore also any set of standards on which assessment is based.

Furthermore, the middle managers (e.g. heads of departments) in schools and colleges who are responsible for teachers' performance and its assessment are themselves teaching for most of the time. Unlike some organisations, these managers do not operate in a purely supervisory capacity and, therefore, any observations of performance have to be 'snapshots' and run the risk of being artificial.

Similarly for headteachers and principals, the uniqueness of each school, with its own needs and stage in its development, means that a common form of assessment of performance is problematic.

### *Variety of models of effective teaching*

As Kyriacou (1986) asks whether teaching is best seen as an art, a craft or a science, so there are inevitably a number of different ways in which effective teaching may be offered. Any model of appraising teacher or headteacher performance therefore needs to be flexible enough to take account of this. The temptation (Middlewood and Cardno, 2001) is to assume that there is one model only by which all teaching or all leadership will be assessed. Formal inspection systems (such as Ofsted in the UK) tend to use one model, because they are required to look at all schools in a similar way, in the interests of raising national standards. Such models inevitably rely on a competences approach, but run the risk of condemning effective teachers who do not fit the mould. One head of a secondary school in England illustrates this:

> Frank taught Mathematics his way. One day, he damaged the passenger door of his car. The next day, he arrived at school with an old fridge door welded in its place. I had to appraise Frank. His style and approach certainly didn't match any known specification of quality teaching. This was a great shame because he was undoubtedly highly effective in certain situations. He was a star with what we might term 'the more challenging' but not in a conventional way. He was clearly disappointed with my lesson observation feedback and requested a second opinion! He also informed me of the powerful influence of his background and that Wigan folk did things differently to the rest of the world anyway. (Marson, 1999: 7)

Similarly with regard to assessing school leaders, MacBeath and Myers (1999: 2) describe the risk of 'precluding the X factor – the surprise, the chemistry, the shift in perspective that may be brought by a candidate who does not fit the arithmetic but may, nonetheless, bring a magical quality to the leadership task.'

## *Context*

If even in a single school a teacher's performance may vary according to the individual students that make up any one class, then the differences between schools and their contexts is even more marked. Thrupp (1999: 157) believes 'contextual differences related to student composition will have to be carefully considered if we are at all serious about assessing teachers fairly'.

Thrupp's own research indicated that effectiveness in teaching differed sharply in an advantaged school from that in one in a more working class context. In the latter, effective teachers took on highly structured roles in controlled classroom environments whereas those in the advantaged schools took comparatively low-key roles, providing stimulus for discussion or action for students' independent learning. Both were effective in their specific contexts.

A further political reality emerges in discussion of the issue of context. Some schools, indeed some areas or even whole countries, struggle to find sufficient teachers of even modest quality and many developing countries operate with large numbers of unqualified teachers. An assessment scheme which applies a single model in all circumstances will simply exacerbate the problem for those already struggling to find staff. As Thrupp bluntly expresses it: 'Senior staff . . . were aware that some staff were ineffectual but consoled themselves that such teachers were valuable to the school in other ways' (Thrupp, 1999: 114–15).

Context may be similarly crucial in developing criteria for appraising school leaders. Leithwood (2001) points out that in a competitive environment experienced by most self-governing schools, not only the attitudes of school leaders towards this competition would differ, but that the wishes of the communities their schools served would differ also. Although marketing and entrepreneurial skills would be needed, and therefore any assessment of the leaders' work should seek evidence of these, the community contexts may differ. They could range from that where success at the expense of others would at the very least not be criticised, to:

> Communities in which equity is a strongly valued goal will want to add criteria to their school leader evaluation policies which reflect the effort of leaders to market their schools in ways that make access possible even for those children and families from diverse and economically disadvantaged backgrounds. (Leithwood, 2001: 48)

### *A new emphasis on learning*

Whilst it is easy to gain agreement that the ultimate purpose of appraising teacher or headteacher performance is to gain improvement in the quality of student learning, and therefore the focus should be on learning outcomes, it is complicated by new understandings of learning in terms of what constitutes effective learning and how it can be recognised. Law and Glover (2000: 164), in adapting Ferguson's (1982) model, suggest a new learning paradigm, which essentially focuses on 'learning how to learn'. Among various features of this paradigm, four may be selected to illustrate the point:

> Learning is a process, a journey . . .
> Teacher learns too – from pupils . . .
> Education is a lifelong process, moves beyond schooling
> Self-image as a generator of performance is a priority. (Law and Glover, 2000: 164)

Each of these features has two important elements – first, the recognition that the learning is unique to each individual and secondly that learning during schooling is only part of a process that continues through life. It follows that the point reached by a group of individuals at any one stage, supported by teacher performance, cannot realistically be assessed by common standards (usually testing) except at the most minimum levels of competence.

However, in the world of competition already referred to, the focus for comparisons between countries, and between schools and colleges within countries, is inevitably upon measurable learning outcomes, such as 'proficiency in literacy and numeracy, examination results, test scores, numbers of students continuing beyond statutory schooling' (Middlewood and Cardno, 2001: 1). In fact, as Preedy (2001: 94) points out, 'Many of the most valuable outcomes of education are multi-dimensional, complex and long-term . . .', and she explains how models that focus upon product evaluation ignore unplanned outcomes and also fail to explore the value and worth of the prescribed objectives. Leithwood goes further and suggests that making judgements about schools, teachers or leaders based on these measurable results can have:

> disastrous unintended consequences . . . for example, minimising individual differences among students, narrowing the implemented curriculum, consuming enormous amounts of valuable instructional time, negatively influencing schools' willingness to accept students with weak academic records, and providing incentives for cheating. (Leithwood, 2001: 53)

Dolton (2000: 8) gives the example in the UK that where schools needed to boost their results in grades A–C at GCSE (16-plus examinations), they implemented strategies of coaching, mentoring and giving extra tuition to 'border-

line' students, so that these would improve from grade D to C. He argues that incentives for teachers through performance related pay would inevitably compel or at least encourage staff to increase this practice, not only fostering a considerable narrowing of educational aims but also conveying a false message to students about what is important in learning.

Similarly, in appraising school leaders, a focus upon measurable outcomes is attractively simplistic, but as West-Burnham (2001: 26) points out, new understanding of leadership at institutional level involves 'challenging authority, risk-taking' as well as 'courage, creativity, emotional intelligence, trust, honour and resilience'. How should these be assessed in terms of outcomes, especially if the authority to be challenged may be responsible for the appraisal process!

### *The issue of rewards*

The linking of an appraisal of performance with some form of reward is clearly very important as an incentive for improving that performance. Fidler and Cooper (1992: xi) suggest that earlier writing on appraisal tended to focus on it either as operating 'in a rather independent way' or solely concerned with developing staff. The former refers to appraisal as a separate process in which, at certain times, an assessment is made of a person's performance and rewards (or not) would follow this accordingly.

In several countries, this appraisal is intended to be built into a career at specific stages, so that the reward for a successful appraisal is advancement to the next stage. Examples of this occur in Israel (Yariv, 2001), New Zealand (Fitzgerald, 2001) and the UK (DfEE, 1999). The doubts about the effectiveness of this lie in the fact that first, the process is a 'one model fits all' (as discussed above) and, second, inherent in it is the acceptance that the vast majority of staff will automatically be successful. Criticism of this approach includes that of Dolton (2000) who argues that it is a negative concept because teachers have to prove they are not incompetent and Ingvarson who describes such schemes in Australia and the U.K. as having a: 'pass rate (which) will be around 90%. The consequence? The assessment gains no respect, there is no recognition and the salary progression quickly becomes automatic, which was what the teacher unions aimed for anyway' (Ingvarson, 2001: 170).

## Management of performance appraisal at institutional level

The key question here is similar to that in several areas of management, i.e. how are national requirements to be managed at individual school or college level, so that statutory requirements are met and at the same time the special features of the individual institution and the people who work there are recognised? In countries where self-management of schools and colleges is well

developed (see Chapter 3 of this book), and therefore the majority of resources are managed at site level, there is clearly scope for this recognition. For example, early in 2001, the Chancellor of the Exchequer in England and Wales decreed that much of the new money for education would go directly to headteachers and principals for them to spend on recruitment and retention of staff as they saw fit. Headteachers could therefore use these funds, for example, for paying higher salaries to attract staff where the supply was limited, or reward high performing staff to retain them.

In countries with more centralised control, although individual schools will inevitably differ to some extent, managers will necessarily experience tensions arising from any national scheme. This may result in the scheme falling into disrepute and/or disuse such as in some regions of Greece (Middlewood, 2001b). Another possibility is the scheme remains vague and therefore difficult to implement, as in Slovenia (Erculj, 2001), or in Israel (Yariv, 2001).

The overriding consideration for managers at institutional level appears to be that managing performance and its appraisal needs to be managed firmly within the context of the integrated management of staff as a whole. Managing performance and its appraisal cannot be separated from all the other processes and aspects involved in managing people – such as recruitment and selection, induction, mentoring, motivation, equal opportunities, delegation, teamwork, stress and time. All of these impact on the performance of individuals, of teams and of the whole organisation, and any attempts to manage performance appraisal as a separate process, introduced occasionally or regularly, without it being viewed by those involved as relevant to themselves, their jobs *and the current time*, will ensure that it eventually falls down the list of priorities.

## Managing the process

In any scheme of performance appraisal, certain components are common, although the relative importance of individual components will vary according to perceived needs at institutional level. These components are:

- some form of self-evaluation
- collection of data about the appraisee
- observation
- a dialogue between appraiser(s) and appraisee
- targets or goals being set.

Practice varies in the importance given to these according to such factors as:

- national scheme requirements
- the principles of the management approach in the organisation

the ethos affecting relationships in the organisation
resources available (including time).

For example, the extent to which self-evaluation is a genuinely full part of the process will have a large influence on the extent of ownership of it by the appraisee, something seen as crucial by a number of writers (Cardno and Piggott-Irvine, 1997; Middlewood, 1997). Classroom observation may be a key feature of many schemes (New Zealand, the UK, South Africa), but how the other aspects of a teacher's contribution to the school's effectiveness (e.g. leadership and management at any level, extra-curricular work, community liaison) are to be effectively appraised and recognised remains an issue for managers of individual institutions.

Underpinning many of the factors determining the extent to which managing performance and its appraisal is perceived to be effective within schools and colleges is the question as to who should appraise whom. In some national schemes, this is the responsibility of the headteacher or principal, although in larger institutions it may and will be delegated. At middle management level, a line management model is most common but in South Africa, for example, a panel must be used (Thurlow, 2001), particularly to ensure objectivity and fairness in the process. There are those who question whether it is possible for a school leader to be sufficiently expert or objective to assess their own staff: 'it is unwise to put principals in this role of making evaluations about the quality of teaching of their own staff when they have to live with the consequences' (Ingvarson, 2001: 170).

The contrary argument is of course that it is precisely because they have to 'live with the consequences' that makes school leaders the people best placed to do this, in a self-managing school. The proviso must be that any potential prejudice needs to be recognised and managed. The UK scheme for a team of external assessors to monitor the processes of assessment for threshold payments in schools seems a barely adequate check on the quality of the assessments, intended though it apparently was to add some objectivity.

The appraisal of school leaders themselves is, perhaps inevitably, mostly done by those external to the school but with a knowledge of it. For example, principals in Singapore are appraised by the area inspector (Chew, 2001), in the UK by a nominated external assessor, and in South Africa by a panel, as mentioned above. Goals for school leaders will also often involve these being set by governors or school councils (as in Canada).

Assessment of the quality of teaching, according to some writers (e.g., Ingvarson, 2001; O'Neill, 1997b) can only be effectively and fairly done by other teachers because they understand the professional standards required and the professional context within which they operate. Ingvarson (2001) describes the scheme of professional certification of teachers being developed in the USA, with its success, it is argued, owing to the fact that it is provided

by an independent professional body (the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards) and that the teachers are fully engaged in the process. Members of the board's committees 'cannot assess teachers personally known to them' (Ingvarson, 2001: 173). As teachers reach the standards for certification, forms of recognition may be given to them by their employers, including salary increases. Whilst the independence of the external body does strengthen the validity of the process, it also appears to run the risk of excessive bureaucracy, for example, 'Each entry takes about 20–30 hours to prepare and is about 12 pages long' (ibid.: 170). The use of panels (South Africa) or committees (the USA) seems unlikely to meet the needs of school managers concerned with ever-increasing demands to raise standards and coping with the pace of change in the twenty-first century, because of the huge demands it places upon managers' time.

O'Neill's (1997b) argument is that any system of appraising the performance of teachers which is occasional and detached from its real context is invalid and he believes that:

> professional knowledge and skills, the essential craft element of teaching, are better developed, analysed and *evaluated* within:
>
> - the normal currency of teaching talk in staffroom, classroom and corridor;
> - the routines of syndicate or departmental collaboration; and
> - the process of translating intangible school and community values into concrete learning opportunities within the classroom.
>
> (O'Neill, 1997b: 118)

While research widely supports the notion of collaboration between teachers as being one of the biggest factors in teaching and learning effectiveness, the accountability aspect discussed earlier is so important that the role of somebody outside the teachers' network seems an inevitable requirement for a scheme to have credibility.

This whole issue, therefore, of considering who should be responsible for appraising whom does suggest that managers would be well advised to consider possibilities such as team appraisal for teachers and 360-degree feedback for leaders. The two provisos are that, first, such possibilities are legitimate within any statutory requirements and, second, the time and context is judged to be appropriate – other stages may well have to be worked through first.

As far as team appraisal is concerned, O'Neill (1997b: 118), without specifying how, argues that appraisal 'needs to focus at the level of group practices and meanings'. Draper (2000) describes a team appraisal approach within which individuals have their own goals and develop professional career portfolios. Research into the perceived impact of individual appraisal on team unity in secondary school subject departments (Middlewood, 2001a) showed

that teachers overwhelmingly believed it could be damaging and divisive to collaborative working, widely seen as effective in schools. When rewards for individual performance were added to this, these were perceived as likely to cause even more damage.

The increasing need for leaders to be linked effectively with an increasing number of stakeholders, both internal and external to the organisation, makes the process of '360-degree feedback' (which involves collecting qualitative data from a range of sources) a potential 'power for genuinely evaluating individual performance and supporting development' (Tomlinson, 2000: 94). It has the added advantage of the leader being in touch with and accountable to a variety of people, including a number who are technically lower in the organisational hierarchy.

## Conclusion: effectiveness in managing performance and appraisal

It is likely that, in industrialised countries in the twenty-first century, models of learning will develop which may drastically alter the role of the teacher. However, the teacher's role is certain to remain pivotal in educational institutions and thus methods of effectively managing and evaluating teachers' performance will continue to be sought after and debated. Effective managers will always be aware of the changing environment within which their institutions exist and, therefore, be conscious that any performance appraisal approach will need to be flexible accordingly, for example, as concepts of rewards, desired outcomes, etc. change. Evidence from experience to date, however, suggests that there are some key principles that will remain relevant to effectiveness in this area.

Whichever scheme is operated, evidence suggests that it should:

- operate within a climate of trust. Trust is always the basis of sound manager/subordinate relationships and moral and ethical issues are always present in the assessment of one person by another. Having a 'procedurally sound system alone will not necessarily produce effective, accurate, ethical performance ratings' (Longenecker and Ludwig, 1995: 68)
- be an integral part of the whole process of managing people within the institution, so that the way people are recruited and inducted, for example, is perceived as similar to the way they are appraised
- balance accountability and personal professional development. As has been argued, any scheme that is too near to either extreme will have major drawbacks
- balance the needs of the organisation and the individual. This can be done, for example, by ensuring that targets or goals set demonstrate recognition of the individual's right to development as well as his/her responsibility to the employer

- recognise that the quality of the students' learning experiences remain central to the ultimate purpose of staff performance, whether teacher, principal or technician
- be constantly reviewed and where necessary adjusted in the light of changed circumstances
- recognise that some of the intended benefits of managing performance and appraising it may inevitably be longer term than others, owing to the complexity of the educational experience and the difficulty of measuring its outcomes in a tangible manner.

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